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SOUVENIR OF

THE COMSTOCK.

Embracing the Principal Views of Virginia City, Gold Hill,  
Silver City and Sutro.

*Photographed and Copyrighted, 1890, by Jas. H. Crockwell, Virginia City, Nevada.*

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*In presenting this Souvenir Album of the Comstock—the compiling of which has been no little task—I am indebted to the well-known Dan. De Quille of Virginia City for the following historical sketch. The views are made by sun-light, electric light and flash light, all of my own work, and I trust that the parties interested in the various views presented will overlook any part that does not fully conform to what they might have preferred in the Album.*

*Very respectfully,*

*J. H. CROCKWELL,*

*PHOTOGRAPHER,  
VIRGINIA CITY, NEVADA.*

# THE COMSTOCK SILVER MINES.

**V**IRGINIA City, the pioneer silver mining town of Nevada and the United States, is perched on the Eastern face of Mount Davidson, the culminating peak of the range of mountains in which lies the famous Comstock silver lode. The altitude of the city above the level of the sea is about 6,000 feet. It was founded in 1859, when the silver mines were discovered. Beginning as a town of tents and shanties, it soon became a city of substantial structures, many of which were of brick and iron.

Gold was first discovered in Nevada in the spring of 1850. It was found in what is now known as Gold Canyon by a company of Mormon emigrants on their way to California. From \$5 to \$8 a day could be made by mining the gravel of the canyon, but this seemed small wages to men who expected to gather gold by the pound in California, therefore all but one or two families went on across the mountains.

Following up this gold in after years led to the discovery, in 1859, of the rich deposit of gold where now stands the town of Gold Hill. This gold in a vein that afterwards became famous as the Comstock silver lode, but at Gold Hill it was gold-bearing on the surface.

At and about Silver City, below Gold Hill, are many mines of gold-bearing quartz (both above and below the Devil's Gate) which contributed their share to the gold dust found in Gold Canyon.

In 1857 gold in paying quantities was found in Six-mile Canyon, above the Sugar Loaf Mountain, and following up the discovery led to the striking of silver at a point just above the head of the Canyon, where Virginia City now stands. The great discovery was made in 1859 by Peter O'Riley and Patrick McLaughlin. While engaged with rockers in washing for gold they dug down into the decomposed top of the silver lode, afterward world-famous.

Virginia City lies along the Comstock lode (which runs north and south) for a distance of over a mile, and is united on the south with the town of Gold Hill, which is also situated on the Comstock silver vein.

The huge hoisting works erected over the mining shafts (from 2,000 to over 3,000 feet in depth) are seen strung along through the two towns for a distance of over two miles. Their great size and their tall iron smoke-stacks making them prominent objects. The immense "dumps" of waste rock seen below all these hoisting works tell of the vastness of the underground workings, and at once arrest the attention of all visitors. There are at present in the city few mills for working the ores mined, most of the reduction works now being on the Carson River, where is almost unlimited water power; though the Nevada mill,

Twins  
David Magee June 1950



in the city, is run in part by a Pelton water wheel (water being taken from the city works) and in part by electricity. The electrical current which drives the water in the mill, is furnished by six Brush dynamos, situated in a great subterranean chamber at the level of the Sutro Tunnel, 1,630 feet below the surface. Each dynamo is driven by a small Pelton water wheel, under a verticle pressure of over 1,600 feet.

The towns of the Comstock are connected with the Central Pacific, and the world's great highways of traffic by the Virginia & Truckee Railroad. This road transports ores to the river mills and brings back to the mines supplies of wood, lumber and mining timbers from the pine forests of the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

At one time—in the “bonanza” days—there was claimed for Virginia City a population, transient and permanent of 20,000 souls, and for the sister town of Gold Hill of 10,000. Now by the census of 1890, Virginia City has a population of no more than 6,337 and Gold Hill 1,072.

Virginia City has fine water works, (water being piped from the Sierras, near Lake Tahoe, thirty miles away) also has both electrical and gas lights, with all other modern conveniences now considered to be the necessary adjuncts of the civilization of the age. There are several fine churches; school-houses that cost from \$20,000 to \$60,000; hospitals and asylums; a fine theatre, and numerous large public halls.

Virginia being “a city set on a hill,” (and a very high hill) offers grand views over the interior mountain ranges and valleys in all directions, but to the westward, where Mount Davidson rises above the town to a height of near 2,000 feet. Both Virginia City and Gold Hill stand upon ground that has been excavated to the depth of from 1,500 to 3,000 feet, forming catacombs surpassing by far, in extent, those of Rome, and containing more pine timber than all the buildings in the largest city on the Pacific coast.

A great work is the Sutro drain tunnel which, starting at the Carson River, has a length of nearly four miles. It taps the lode at a depth of 1,600 feet and drains all the mines of both towns. Its construction lasted eight years and cost about \$4,500,000, being \$2,000,000 more than the cost of the great works of the Virginia City and Gold Hill Water Company.

The mines of the Comstock lode, from the discovery of silver to the present time, have yielded between \$350,000,000 and \$400,000,000; of this, two-thirds was silver and one-third gold. The California and Consolidated Virginia mines alone (in which lay the immense body of rich ore, known as the “Big Bonanza”) have yielded about \$120,000,000 and have paid about \$80,000,000 in dividends.

The mines are still worked to a good profit, though most of the ore is at present of a low grade, and each month there are paid out to employees from \$180,000 to \$200,000 as wages. Miners are paid \$4.00 a day for eight hours' work.

There are on the Comstock lode many large areas of virgin ground still to be explored, and great and rich bonanzas may yet be found. The “Big Bonanza,” the greatest ever found in the United States, was hit upon at a time when all on the Comstock was at a low ebb, and when many were deserting the two towns utterly discouraged.



VIRGINIA CITY, FROM CEDAR HILL.



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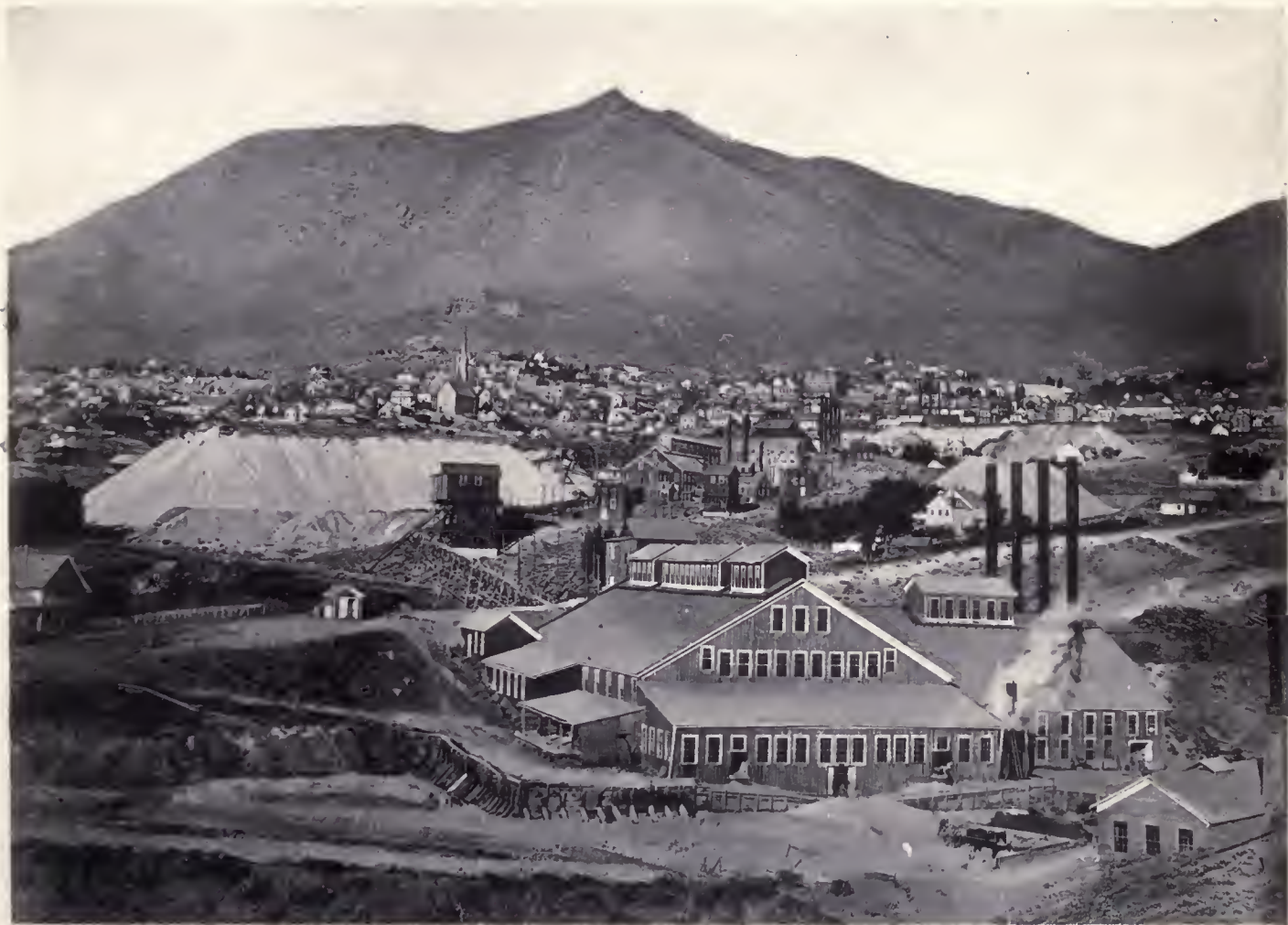


TOP OF MT. DAVIDSON.

VIRGINIA CITY FROM TOP OF MT. DAVIDSON.

VIRGINIA CITY AND MT. DAVIDSON.





C. & C. PAN MILL, SHOWING VIRGINIA CITY AND MT. DAVIDSON.







UTAH.  
SIERRA NEVADA.

COMBINED VIEW, SHOWING GEIGER GRADE.  
HOISTING WORKS OVER MINES.

UNION.  
CONSOLIDATED VIRGINIA.







GOULD & CURRY.

OPHIR.

HALE & NORCROSS.  
HOISTING WORKS.

SAVAGE.

CHOLLAR.





C. & C. HOISTING WORKS.  
C. & C. WIRE ROPE ROOM.

C. & C. WASTE DUMPS.  
INTERIOR C. & C. PAN MILL.



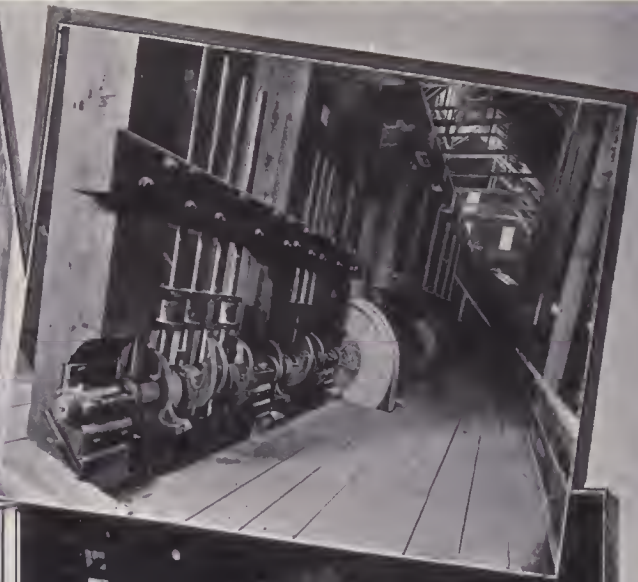
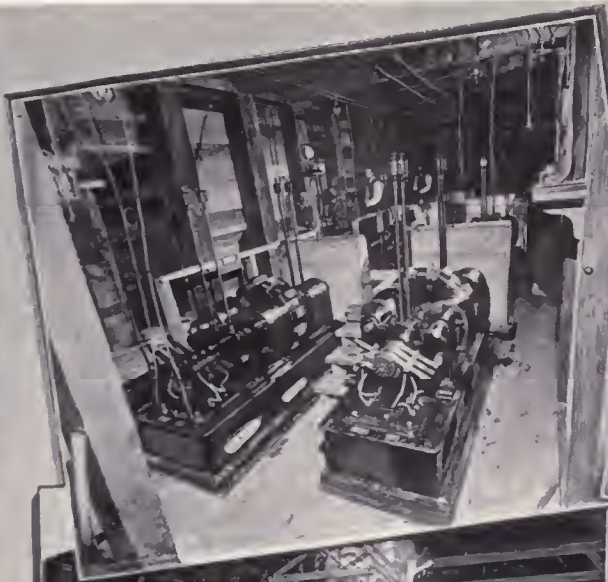




NEVADA MILL, RUN BY ELECTRICITY.





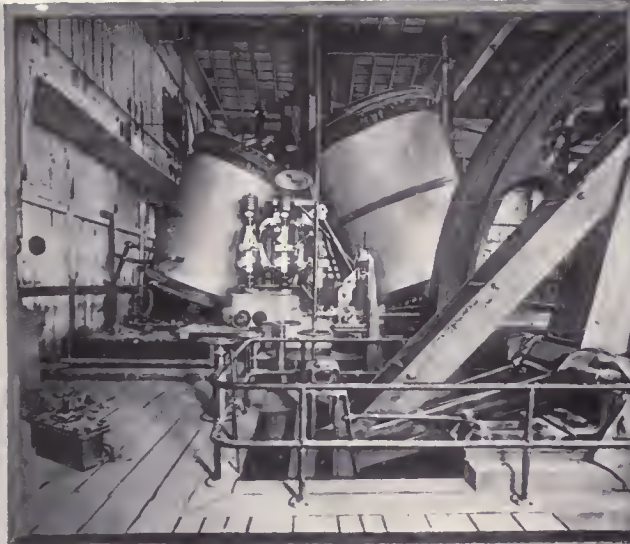


DYNAMO ROOM 1630 FEET UNDER MILL, PHOTO MADE BY ELECTRIC LIGHT.  
PAN ROOM.

STAMP ROOM.  
MOTOR ROOM.

ROOMS OF NEVADA MILL.



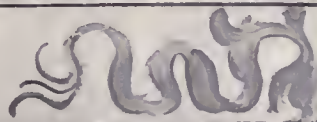
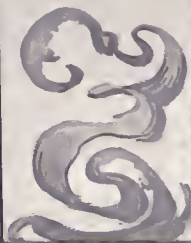


UNION PUMP ENGINE.  
BURLEIGH DRILLS AT WORK, MADE BY FLASH-LIGHT.

CHAMBER IN C. & C. AT THE 1650 FOOT LEVEL, BY FLASH-LIGHT.  
INTERIOR UNION WORKS—DRAFT WHEEL WEIGHING 110 TONS.







JACKET.  
BELCHER.

ALPH.

CROWN POINT.  
KENTUCK.

HOISTING WORKS AT GOLD HILL.





ALTA MINE AND MILL.  
FULTON FOUNDRY.

WOODVILLE MINE AND MILL.  
DEVIL'S GATE.







SUTRO TUNNEL.

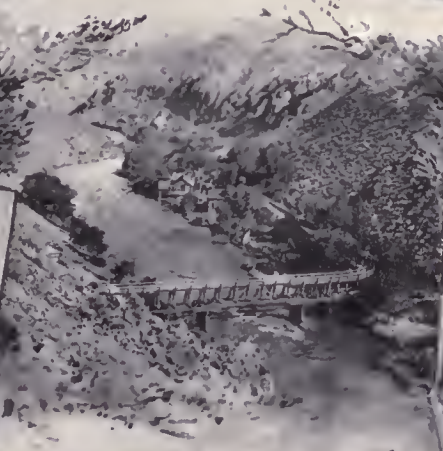
SUTRO TUNNEL AND MULE TRAIN.

ADOLPH SUTRO, FOUNDER OF THE SUTRO TUNNEL.

SUTRO FROM THE TUNNEL.

SUTRO MANSION AND MACHINE SHOP.





THE C. C. STEVENSON,  
THE KUREKA.

THE BRUNSWICK,  
THE VIVIAN,  
CARSON RIVER MILLS.

THE MEXICAN,  
THE MORGAN.







COURT HOUSE,

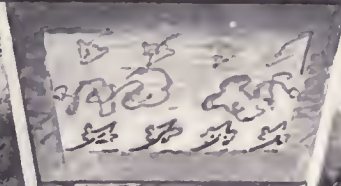
SAVAGE OFFICE.



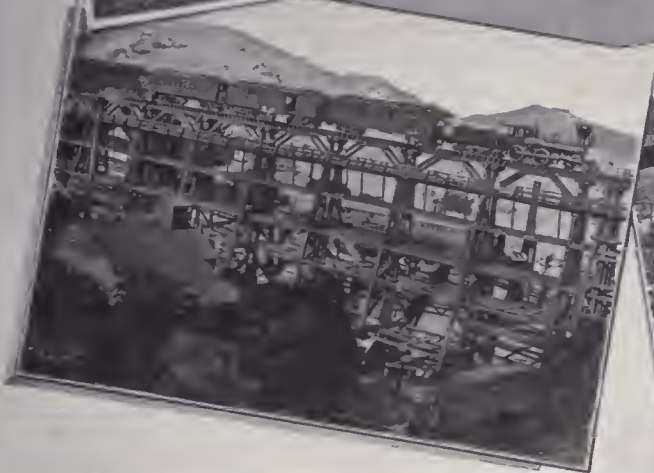
GOLD HILL SCHOOL.



FOURTH WARD SCHOOL.







VIRGINIA & TRUCKEE ORE TRAIN.  
CROWN POINT TRESTLE, 84 FEET HIGH.

VIRGINIA & TRUCKEE R. R. EXPRESS AND DEPOT.  
EARLY DAY SCENE IN GOLD CANYON WHEN GOLD WAS FIRST DISCOVERED IN NEVADA IN 1850.







IOWA RAVINE.



SUGAR LOAF MOUNTAIN, SIX MILE CANYON.



SISTERS' HOSPITAL.



PAN MILL, SIX MILE CANYON.





OPIR MINE.  
SAVAGE MINE.

THREE BICKELL BROTHERS WHO LOST THEIR LIVES  
IN THE FIRE IN GOLD HILL MINE, APRIL 7th, 1869.  
MINERS OF THE COMSTOCK, AS THEY WORK UNDER GROUND.

GOULD & CURRY MINE.  
CHOLLAR MINE.

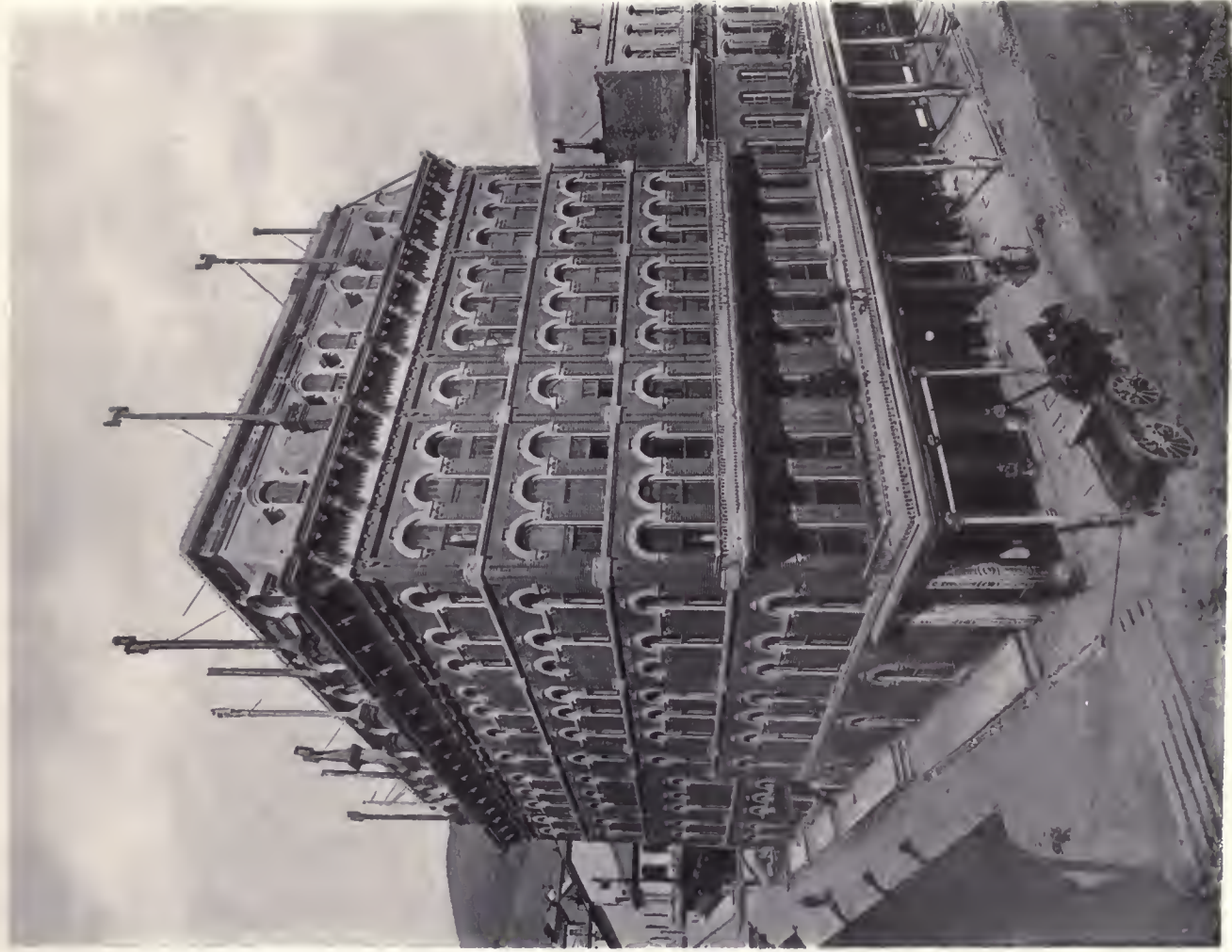






PIUTES OF NEVADA.





INTERNATIONAL HOTEL.









